

TOPANGA CANYON AND SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NORTH  
AREA COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICTS  
ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

**ORDINANCE NO.** \_\_\_\_\_

An ordinance amending Title 22, Planning and Zoning of the Los Angeles County Code, related to authorizing certain yard modifications with a director's review and adding development standards for fences, walls and landscaping to the Topanga Canyon and Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards Districts.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles ordains as follows:

**SECTION 1.** Section 22.44.119 Topanga Canyon Community Standards District is amended as follows:

**22.44.119 Topanga Canyon Community Standards District.** A. Intent and Purpose. The Topanga Canyon Community Standards District is established to implement certain policies related to small lot subdivision development contained in the Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan. The district will establish development standards in hillside and other areas that lack adequate infrastructure or that are subject to the potential hazards of fire, flood or geologic instability. Preservation of important ecological resources and scenic features will also be accomplished through the use of this district. The district also addresses fences, walls and landscaping located along roads within the Topanga Community and promotes alternative designs that include safety features.

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D. Community-wide Development Standards

1. Fences and walls. The following provisions apply to new construction and/or replacement of fences and walls above three and one-half feet in height within required front yards, and within required corner side yards, rear yards and interior yards where closer than five feet to the highway line:

a. Height. No fence or wall shall exceed six feet in height, inclusive of any architectural feature, fixture and/or support element attached to or part of the fence.

b. Transparency. At least 70 percent of the fence or wall area above three and one-half feet in height shall be open-air and non-view-obscuring; no slats or other view-obscuring materials may be inserted into, placed in front of or behind, or affixed to such fences and walls; vertical support elements shall be a minimum five feet apart; and no non-support vertical or horizontal fence elements shall exceed two inches in diameter.

c. Materials. All yard fences and walls shall be constructed of stone, brick, rock, block, concrete, wood, stucco, tubular steel, wrought iron or a combination of these materials. Either recycled or composite materials, each with the appearance and texture of wood, may also be used. Chain link, wire and highly reflective materials are prohibited. Except vertical support elements, the area of the fences and walls above three and one-half feet in height shall be constructed of only wood, tubular steel, wrought iron or either recycled or composite materials, each with the appearance and texture of wood. Fence and wall materials shall either be:

(i) Noncombustible construction;

(ii) Ignition resistant and meet the requirements of

State Fire Marshall section 12-7A-4 parts A and B;

(iii) Heavy timber construction; or

(iv) Exterior fire-retardant treated wood

construction.

d. Colors. Only earth-tone and neutral colors that are

similar to the surrounding landscape shall be used.

2. Landscaping. Trees, shrubs, vines, flowers and other landscaping forming a barrier or obstructing views in the same manner as a fence or wall shall not exceed six feet in height if located within 10 feet of a highway line. Landscaping located more than 10 feet away from the highway line may extend up to six feet in height.

3. Modifications Authorized. Any modifications to the fence, wall and landscaping standards contained in subsections D.1 and D.2 granted by the director pursuant to Section 22.48.180 and the procedures of Part 12 of Chapter 22.56 shall include findings that the proposal will not create a safety hazard and will not impair views of scenic resources. In addition to the information required under Section 22.48.180, an application for a director's review requesting a yard modification shall contain the following information:

a. A scaled site plan showing the proposed fence or wall location, setbacks and fence or wall height measurements.

b. A scaled elevation drawing of the proposed fence or wall showing measurements of all fence or wall elements, including fence or wall height, and all proposed materials and colors.

E. Zone-specific Development Standards (Reserved)

F. Area-specific Development Standards. The following provisions apply to all land within small lot subdivisions, as defined in this section:

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5. Procedural Requirements.

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b. Any modifications of development standards, except for fences, walls and landscaping pursuant to subsection D.3, shall be considered only through the variance procedures contained in Part 2, Chapter 22.56 of this code. The maximum allowable gross structural area as determined by the slope intensity formula shall not be subject to modification.

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**SECTION 2.** Section 22.44.133 Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District is amended as follows:

F. Area-Specific Development Standards.

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2. Topanga Canyon Area.

a. Intent and Purpose. The Topanga Canyon area is established to implement certain policies related to small lot subdivision development contained in the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan. The

area-specific development standards are intended to mitigate the impacts of development on small lots in hillside and other areas that lack adequate infrastructure or are subject to the potential hazards of fire, flood, or geologic instability, and to preserve important ecological resources and scenic features found in this area. The district also addresses fences, walls and landscaping located along roads within the Topanga Community and promotes alternative designs that include safety features.

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d. Development Standards.

i. Fences and walls. The following provisions apply to new construction and/or replacement of fences and walls above three and one-half feet in height within required front yards, and within required corner side yards, rear yards and interior yards where closer than five feet to the highway line:

(A) Height. No fence or wall shall exceed six feet in height, inclusive of any architectural feature, fixture and/or support element attached to or part of the fence.

(B) Transparency. At least 70 percent of the fence or wall area above three and one-half feet in height shall be open-air and non-view-obscuring; no slats or other view-obscuring materials may be inserted into, placed in front of or behind, or affixed to such fences and walls; vertical support elements shall be a minimum five feet apart; and no non-support vertical or horizontal fence elements shall exceed two inches in diameter.

(C) Materials. All yard fences shall be constructed of stone, brick, rock, block, concrete, wood, stucco, tubular steel, wrought iron or a combination of these materials. Either recycled or composite materials, each with the appearance and texture of wood, may also be used. Chain link, wire and highly reflective materials are prohibited. Except vertical support elements, the area of the fences and walls above three and one-half feet in height shall be constructed of only wood, tubular steel, wrought iron or either recycled or composite materials, each with the appearance and texture of wood. Fence and wall materials shall either be:

(1) Noncombustible construction;

(2) Ignition resistant and meet the requirements of State Fire Marshall section 12-7A-4 parts A and B;

(3) Heavy timber construction; or

(4) Exterior fire-retardant treated wood construction.

(D) Colors. Only earth-tone and neutral colors that are similar to the surrounding landscape shall be used.

ii. Landscaping. Trees, shrubs, vines, flowers and other landscaping forming a barrier or obstructing views in the same manner as a fence or wall shall not exceed six feet in height if located within 10 feet of a highway line. Landscaping located more than 10 feet away from the highway line may extend up to six feet in height. .

iii. Modifications Authorized. Any modifications to the fence, wall and landscaping standards contained in subsections d.i and d.ii

granted by the director pursuant to Section 22.48.180 and the procedures of Part 12 of Chapter 22.56 shall include findings that the proposal will not create a safety hazard and will not impair views of scenic resources. In addition to the information required under Section 22.48.180, an application for a director's review requesting a yard modification shall contain the following information:

(A) A scaled site plan showing the proposed fence or wall location, setbacks and fence or wall height measurements.

(B) A scaled elevation drawing of the proposed fence or wall showing measurements of all fence or wall elements, including fence or wall height, and all proposed materials and colors.

iv. Development Standards. The construction of residential units on a lot or parcel of land of less than one acre within a small lot subdivision shall be subject to the following development standards:

i. (A) For the construction of residential units on a lot or parcel of land of 5,000 square feet or more, the maximum gross structural area shall be equal to 20 percent of the area of the lot or parcel. Construction of residential units on a lot or parcel of land of less than 5,000 square feet shall be subject to the following slope intensity formula:

(A) (1) The maximum allowable gross structural area of a residential unit to be constructed on a building site shall be determined by the following formula:

$$\underline{GSA = (A/5) \times [(50-S)/35] + 500}$$

Where:

A = the area of the building site in square feet. The building site is defined by the applicant and may consist of all or a designated portion of the one or more lots comprising the project location. All permitted structures must be located within the designated building site.

S = the average slope of the building site in percent as calculated by the formula:

$$\underline{S = I \times L/A \times 100}$$

Where:

S = average natural slope in percent.

I = contour interval in feet, at not greater than 25-foot intervals, resulting in at least five contour lines.

L = total accumulated length of all contour lines of interval "I" in feet.

A = the area of the building site in square feet.

~~(B)~~ (2) All slope calculations shall be based on natural, not graded conditions. Maps of a scale generally not less than one inch equals 10 feet (1"=10'), showing the building site and existing slopes, prepared by a licensed surveyor or registered professional civil engineer, shall be submitted with the application. If slope is greater than 50 percent, enter 50 for S in the GSA formula.

~~(C)~~ (3) The maximum allowable GSA as calculated above may be increased as follows:



~~(4)~~ (a) Add 500 square feet or 12.5 percent of the total lot area, whichever is less, for each lot which is contiguous to the designated building site, provided that such lot(s) is (are) combined with the building site, and all potential for residential development on such lot(s) is permanently extinguished.

~~(2)~~ (b) Add 300 square feet or 7.5 percent of the total lot area, whichever is less, for each lot in the vicinity of (e.g., in the same small lot subdivision) but not contiguous with the designated building site, provided that such lot(s) is (are) combined with other developed or developable building sites and all potential for residential development on such lot(s) is permanently extinguished.

~~(D)~~ (4) The floor area requirement for single-family residences contained in Section 22.20.105 shall not apply.

~~(E)~~ (5) All residences approved in small lot subdivisions by the slope intensity formula shall be subject to an improvement condition requiring that any future additions or improvements to the property shall be subject to an additional review by the director.

ii. (B) The provisions of Sections 22.48.060, 22.48.080, and 22.48.140 shall not apply.

iii. (C) Procedural Requirements.

~~(A)~~ (1) Any building or grading permit shall be subject to the director's review procedure contained in Part 12 of Chapter 22.56, except that the director shall not consider requests for modification.

(B) (2) Any modifications of development standards, except for fences, walls and landscaping pursuant to subsection F.2.d.iii, shall be considered only through the variance procedures contained in Part 2 of Chapter 22.56. The maximum allowable gross structural area as determined by the slope intensity formula shall not be subject to modification.

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